

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 00822 170445Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 SP-02 /042 W
-----059244 170448Z /13
O 170414Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4968
CINCPAC HONOLULU

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 00822

FOR: IOR IBS IPS, CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR

EO 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: US AIRCRAFT SALES MEDIA REACTION

1. THE NEW ZEALAND HERALD, NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER, COMMENTED IN ITS THIRD EDITORIAL UNDER THE HEADING "AMERICAN JETS FOR EGYPT," FEBRUARY 17:
2. "WHAT OCCURS ON THE SURFACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE QUEST MAY BE, MORE THAN IN MOST DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE GAMES, ONLY A VENEER. IT IS POSSIBLE, FOR INSTANCE, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MAY HAVE DECIDED TO SELL 50 F-5E JET FIGHTERS TO EGYPT AND 60 F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA IN THE BELIEF THAT CONGRESS WOULD BLOCK THE SALE. AFTER ALL, MR CARTER SAID DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN THAT HE WAS DISTURBED ABOUT THE INCREASING PROPORTION OF AMERICAN ARMS GOING TO MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES OTHER THAN ISRAEL.
3. "BUT NOW, ONLY 16 MONTHS AFTER HE SAID THAT "THERE OUGHT TO BE A CLEAR, UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT WITHOUT CHANGE TO ISRAEL," MR CARTER HAS RISKED ANTAGONISING A STRONG JEWISH CONSTITUENCY BY DECIDING TO SUPPLY EGYPT

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FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH AMERICAN OFFENSIVE WEAPONS. IT IS NOT THE FIRST CAMPAIGN NAIVETY HE HAS HAD TO ABANDON.

4. "THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIGHTERS FOR EGYPT MAY BE MORE POLITICAL THAN MILITARY. PRESIDENT SADAT NEEDS FIRM SIGNS OF AMERICAN RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT; THE AMERICANS, PERHAPS, HOPE FOR THE TOUCH OF INFLUENCE THAT

AN ARMS SUPPLIER HAS WITH A CLIENT. THE ISRAELIS HAVE
BEEN ANGERED BY THE DECISION. THE STRENGTH OF THE MOVE
SHOULD BECOME CLEARER AFTER MR CARTER MEETS THE ISRAELI
PRIME MINISTER, MR BEGIN, NEXT MONTH." ANDERSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978WELLIN00822
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780073-0105
Format: TEL
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780238/aaaabgcn.tel
Line Count: 66
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eff107d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3550614
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US AIRCRAFT SALES MEDIA REACTION
TAGS: SOPN, MASS, US, EG, NZ
To: USIA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eff107d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014